(b) the number of families living mostly by shifting cultivation;

(c) the steps taken by the Central Government to modernize shifting cultivation in this age of science and technology; and

(d) the steps to be taken to extend assistance to Tripura in enriching shifting cultivation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Shifting cultivation is being practiced in the parts of the States of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa and Tripura.

(b) According to an estimate, 6,07,536 families are practicing shifting cultivation in these States.

(c) and (d) A Scheme of Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSCA) is being implemented in the seven North Eastern States including Tripura by Ministry of Agriculture to improve productivity by introducing appropriate land uses as per capability and improved technologies for socio-economic upgradation of the jhumia families. During 2002-03 an amount of Rs. 250.00 lakh was released to the State of Tripura under the Scheme.

Pesticides in fruits and vegetables

1112. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that according to a leading NGO, vegetables and fruits brought at the city's markets contain unacceptable level of harmful pesticides and fertilizers;

(b) whether, according to the Foundation of Food Research and Enterprise to Safety and Hygiene (FRESH) every fruit and vegetable has a fair amount of pesticides and fertilizers, unless it comes from an orchard; and

(c) if so, the action Government propose to take in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The Department is

not aware regarding observations of Foundation of Food Research and Enterprise to Safety and Hygiene (FRESH) on this issue. However, according to the monitoring study of farm-gate and market samples of fruits and vegetables conducted by All India Coordinated Research Project on Pesticide Residues, out of 359 samples of different fruits analysed, 46% samples were found to contain residues of locally applied pesticides such as endosulfan, cholorpyriphos, malathion, cypermethrin, carbendazim, mancozeb etc. However, in all these fruit samples, the residues were found to be below the prescribed MRL values.

Further, a total of 592 samples of different vegetables analyzed, about 64% were found contaminated with residues of different pesticides. However, only 9% of the total samples contained resides above their respective MRL values. Pesticides residues in vegetables can be decontaminated to 80 to 100% by washing and cooking.

(c) Government of India is concerned about the contamination of pesticides in fruits and vegetables and a number of steps have been taken to reduce the pesticides residues therein:—

(1) Replacement of old pesticides which are required to be used in high dosages and which persist for a longer period in the environment with newer pesticide molecules, which are used in low volume and are less persistent in the environment;

(2) Judicious use of pesticides being promoted through practice of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) which emphasizes reduced pesticide application;

(3) Promotion of Organic farming;

(4) Increased use of Bio-control agents and Bio-pesticides in agriculture as a replacement of chemical pesticides.

(5) Awareness campaign through Farmers Field Schools to educate farmers about ill effects of pesticides and emphasis on Integrated Pest Management practices.

Assistance to Maharashtra for livestock development corporation

1113. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to provide financial and